so with the others. But the statement is not clear, and, taken with that on p. 35, is calculated to give a wrong impression.

The whole of the useful information in the book could without difficulty be given in a pamphlet one-tenth its size. No index is provided; had it been, the amount of needless repetition would have been made evident at a glance.

(2) For some time after the introduction of rations housewives found it difficult to adapt their cookery to the new conditions. The recipes compiled by Miss Mitchell are intended to help in this matter, and are well adapted to do so. After some useful points on economy in the use of fuel and in making the most of fat in cooking, the recipes proper are given in detail. These are grouped into recipes for (1) meat dishes, more than forty in number; (2) vegetables and sundries, seventeen in number; (3) other meatless dishes, numbering no fewer than sixty; (4) soups, ten; (5) fish, eighteen; (6) sauces, eight; (7) salads, seven; (8) pastry and batters, eleven; (9) puddings and sweets, thirteen; (10) bread and cakes, thirteen; (11) preserves, fifteen.

A mere list does not, however, convey an adequate idea of the value of the book. The recipes are all carefully selected by a writer having practical experience of her subject, and are in most cases excellent.

## OUR BOOKSHELF.

*Applied Bacteriology: Studies and Reviews of some Present-day Problems for the Laboratory Worker, the Clinician, and the Administrator.* Edited by Dr. C. H. Browning. Pp. xvi+291. (London: H. Frowde and Hodder and Stoughton, 1918.) Price 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

THIS book comprises an account of research work on bacteriological subjects by Dr. Browning and co-workers, carried out partly in the Pathological Department of the University and Western Infirmary, Glasgow, and partly in the Bland Sutton Institute of Pathology of the Middlesex Hospital. Much of the matter included has already appeared in the form of separate published papers, but these have been added to and extended.

Dr. Browning contributes an introduction on the scope of applied bacteriology, in which he emphasises that the best results can be attained only by highly trained and experienced workers who have a large part of their time free for original research. Then follow the series of papers the subjects of which include the diagnosis of "enterica" infections (typhoid and paratyphoid fevers and dysentery) by bacteriological and serological methods, by Drs. Browning, Mackie, and Thornton; the use of calibrated pipettes in serological work, by Dr. Browning; observations on the diphtheria group of organisms and on the isolation of *B. diphtheriae* by means of a medium containing telluric acid, by Dr. J. F. Smith; studies on antiseptics, with special reference to selective inhibitory action, by Drs. Browning, Gilmour, and Gulbrausen, in which the action of the flavines and other aniline dyes is considered; and the use of ultra-violet radiations as a means of discriminating between, and of isolating, certain micro-organisms, by Drs. Browning and Russ. The final paper is a summary of what is known about tetanus, by Dr. Browning. This subject is of so much importance in connection with the war that this epitome is very welcome.

Being largely a reprint of research work, the value of this volume can scarcely be appraised at present, but it may be said that much of the matter forms a notable contribution to the advancement of bacteriological science. R. T. H.

*Veterinary Post-Mortem Technic.* By Prof. W. J. Crocker. Pp. xiv+233. (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1918.) Price 16*s*. net.

A BOOK of this type has long been needed to fill a gap in veterinary literature. So far as we are aware, there has previously been no work detailing in a systematic manner the making of post-mortem examinations on the lower animals, and, consequently, reports of autopsies have been lacking in uniformity, and often the most important features have been omitted or insufficiently emphasised owing to the lack of system. Prof. Crocker's book will go far to remedy that state of affairs, and should be in the hands of all students and most practitioners of veterinary pathology. As might be expected, there are several minor points with which we are not in entire agreement. For example, it is suggested that in the case of a small animal suspected of rabies the head severed from the body as close to the trunk as possible should be dispatched to the laboratory for examination. In our opinion it would be far better to send the whole body without mutilation —the extra weight of a small animal is of no importance. The author recommends the use of Müller's fluid for preserving tissues; it would have been better if the formula had been included. He also recommends the use of slat platforms to be used on the floor of the autopsy room. Wood, however, is not an ideal material for use under these conditions, owing to the difficulty of disinfection, which can be properly carried out only by burning, thus causing continual expense. With regard to the examination of the various organs, we are of opinion that insufficient attention is paid to the examination of the various lymphatic glands, which are of paramount importance in post-mortem examinations in numerous affections.

As a whole the book has been written in a very clear and lucid manner, and there is little fault to find with it. The photographic illustrations of the various methods of procedure are excellent.

*Common Beetles and Spiders, and How to Identify Them.* By S. N. Sedgwick. Pp. 62. (London: Charles H. Kelly, n.d.) Price 1*s*. 6*d*. net.

IN this little volume the author treats, in a style necessarily sketchy and incomplete, of some com-

© 1918 Nature Publishing Group

mon British beetles and spiders. In dealing with either group he gives first a short general account of structure and habits, next an outline classification of tribes or families, and then a list of some common species with characteristics so superficially described that the promise "How to Identify Them" contained in the title cannot be considered as fulfilled. The 228 beetles chosen for listing are illustrated by natural-size photographs, most of which are too obscure to be of use. The larger photographs of some selected spiders, supplemented by four plates of outline drawings, are less unsatisfactory, but the front-view portrait on p. 50 lettered "Wolf-spider" is evidently taken from a jumping-spider (Salticid). The classification and nomenclature adopted for both spiders and beetles are those of the naturalists of fifty years ago.

*Canning and Bottling, with Notes on other Simple Methods of Preserving Fruit and Vegetables.* By Dr. H. P. Goodrich. With an Introduction by Prof. Frederick Keeble. Pp. x+70. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1918.) Price 2*s.*

IN spite of its modest size, this book contains a great deal of valuable information on bottling, canning, pulping, drying, and salting vegetables and fruit. In the first part of the book the author describes fully practical methods, while in the second part a brief account of the behaviour of bacteria and fungi, the micro-organisms which have to be fought by the preserver of fruit and vegetables, is given. The canning of fruit, which is extremely popular in America, but comparatively little used by amateurs in this country, is warmly recommended in regard both to the flavour and quality of the products and to the rapidity and simplicity with which the work can be carried out. The fear of tin and of ptomaine poisoning, which has prevented some people from canning vegetables, is shown to be entirely groundless.

*The Stars, and How to Identify Them.* By E. Walter Maunder. Pp. 64. (London: Charles H. Kelly, n.d.)

THE war has renewed interest in the constellations as guides for night-marching, etc., and several handbooks have been published for this purpose. Mr. Maunder gives here in a condensed form much of the information contained in his "Astronomy of the Bible" and his numerous papers on early Babylonian astronomy.

The constellations of the entire celestial sphere are shown in twenty-six clearly printed maps; the constellation figures are not drawn, but the stars of each group are connected by thin lines, which in many cases give some rough idea of the object the name of which it bears. A summary of the ancient myths relating to the grouping of the constellations is given, as affording a useful aid to the memory regarding their mutual configuration. Four northern and one southern key maps indicate the positions of the constellations at the various seasons.

ANDREW C. D. CROMMELIN.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of* NATURE. *No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]*

### Observations of Nova Aquilæ in India.

IN NATURE of June 13 I note that the earliest observation of Nova Aquilæ in England was made by Miss Grace Cook at 9.30 G.M.T. on June 8, and the magnitude was estimated as equal to Altair. In India the star was seen and recognised as a nova about five hours earlier by Mr. G. N. Bower in Madras, who has sent me his original notes made at 10 p.m. Indian Standard Time on June 8 (corresponding with 4.30 p.m. G.M.T.). Mr. Bower was occupied in pointing out the principal stars and constellations to a friend, and identifying them with the aid of Mrs. Evershed's "Guide to the Southern Stars." Turning to the eastern sky, he at once saw a star on the borders of Aquila and Serpens which he could not place. It appeared to be as bright as Altair, or possibly brighter, but not so bright or white as Vega. Altair was, however, unfavourably placed for the comparison.

At Jhelum, North India, the star was independently discovered on June 9, 3.30 a.m. I.S.T. (10 p.m., June 8, G.M.T.), by Mr. C. L. Dundas, I.C.S., who kindly advised me by telegram of his observation. He also estimated it as equal to Altair, but at the same time on the following night "it was apparently equal to Vega."

At Kodaikanal I was photographing the spectrum of Venus on the morning of June 8, and can state with some confidence that the nova had not then appeared, or perhaps it would be safer to say that it had not risen above the second magnitude. The sky was exceptionally clear that morning, and the brilliance of the Milky Way attracted special attention between 4 a.m. and dawn, about an hour later. Mrs. Evershed and myself were both observing the Milky Way, and both had the possibility of detecting novæ at the back of our minds. This narrows down the time of the outburst to between 11 p.m. G.M.T. on June 7 and 4 p.m. G.M.T. June 8.

The spectrum of the nova has been studied here in some detail, thanks to the partial failure of the monsoon in Southern India, which resulted in a good number of fairly clear nights from early in June to the middle of July. Two series of spectrum photographs were obtained simultaneously—a large-scale series with a 6-in. prismatic camera, and a small-scale series with a 2-in. prismatic camera, the latter showing considerable extension in the ultra-violet. By a special arrangement of the apparatus I was able to photograph a comparison spectrum of Arcturus accurately aligned with the nova, so that the wave-lengths in the nova spectrum have been determined by reference to the lines in Arcturus

On the nights of June 12–13 and 13–14 many of the absorption lines in the nova appeared to be in duplicate, and there are two series of hydrogen absorption lines, both enormously displaced towards violet; the wider, more refrangible series in $H\beta$, $H\gamma$, and $H\delta$ gives a mean displacement corresponding with 2700 km./sec., whilst the comparatively narrow, less refrangible series gives 1720 km./sec., both in the direction of approach. This is with reference to Arcturus, and uncorrected for the component of the earth's motion, which is very small. In later plates the more refrangible set

© 1918 Nature Publishing Group